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COMMEMORATION AND PROPAGANDA IN SALAZAR'S PORTUGAL: THE PORTUGUESE WORLD EXHIBITION OF 1940

The double centenary celebrated at the *Exposição do Mundo Português* (Portuguese World Exhibition) held in Lisbon between June and December 1940 was the first major cultural event of the *Estado Novo* (New State) dictatorship and marked the high-point of its 'nationalist-imperialist' propaganda. Staged to commemorate the foundation of the nation in 1140 and independence from Spain in 1640, the Exhibition became a vehicle for the diffusion and legitimization of the dictatorship's ideology and values in which the idea of the nation was (re)constructed through a series of carefully-planned images, myths and symbols (1). This article examines how the dictatorship of António Oliveira Salazar utilized the Exhibition to project its specific representation of historiography and national identity and to further its broader political aims, including the validation and legitimization of its rule. It will argue that, despite its reputation for minimal mobilization and for eschewing populism, festivities were a core ingredient in the *Estado Novo*'s cultural policy. While Salazar disliked, even feared, the emotional, mass events associated with Hitler and Mussolini's propaganda machines, he did value them for their legitimizing, educative and propagandistic functions. In this, the regime was quite prepared to borrow selectively from the showcase events staged by the 'classic' fascisms and blend them with an exhibition formula sculptured from a decade of staging exhibitions and participating in World Fairs (2).

It is argued that the Salazar dictatorship preferred to involve the population in essentially passive state-sponsored spectacles in preference to mobilizing them through a mass party, public rallies, or similar mechanisms. Salazar deliberately avoided the choreography and collective fervour associated with the mass meetings that characterized Italian Fascism and German Nazism. Instead, he preferred to construct an imagined

community and sense of pride by way of commemorations, exhibitions and symbols throughout the duration of a dictatorship that spanned four decades. To foster that imagined community, the regime launched an extensive public works programme to restore historic buildings, monuments and traditional villages (3). An almost obsessive concern for restoring the national heritage prompted comments in some quarters that Salazar would have liked to turn his country into a large museum. As the showcase for the first phase of this project, the 1940 Exhibition revolved around the core symbols of identity as defined by Salazar regime. Among the recurrent symbols mobilized during the 1940 Exhibition were God, nation, family, work, authority; rurality (traditional values and peasant life); unity, cohesion; international recognition; universalism, empire, civilization and multi-racialism. This article will explore how this litany was melded together in an attempt to forge a new, selective cultural identity as expressed in a major exhibition.

Our understanding of the dynamics of inter-war authoritarianism has been greatly enhanced in recent years through a focus on the role played by culture and aesthetics in constructing fascist and other inter-war authoritarian regimes. The culturalist approach to fascism investigates the dimensions that had previously been dismissed as shallow ‘veneer’, such as style, rhetoric, spectacle and myth (4). Roger Griffin argues that culture was appropriated in order to generate consensus and mobilize the population without conceding any access to power. He identifies the key features as the proliferation of public works to forge ‘sacred’ spaces and the introduction of ceremonies and rituals aimed at the regeneration of the nation (5). In this regard, Salazar shared the inter-war authoritarian concern with decadence and the drive for renewal in all aspects of national life. In 1936, the regime celebrated the tenth anniversary of the military coup that installed the dictatorship (*ano X da Revolução Nacional*-Year Ten of the National Revolution) on the basis that it marked the beginning of a *nova era* (a new era). Later, when António Ferro, the propaganda chief, referred to 1940 as ‘the tremendous year of resurgence’ (6), he conformed to Griffin’s paligenetic definition of national rebirth. No doubt, Salazar’s Catholic seminarian background inclined him to share a belief in rituals as important elements in an ideological project intended to graft new identities onto old

ones. Indeed, it has been argued that the inter-war dictatorships promoted the ‘festival state’ in which political rituals were performed regularly and reinforced by temporary exhibitions because the fascist political culture ‘aimed to colonize the mind as well as the state’ and public spectacles were the ‘favoured vehicle of cultural persuasion and reconstruction’(7). The architects of the Portuguese New State were preoccupied with the selection and presentation of markers of national identity for consumption by a domestic and international audience. In this regard, the longevity of the Salazar regime ensured that numerous opportunities arose for the regime to refine its skills at organizing commemorative events. Various centennials and anniversaries punctuated the Salazar era providing ample opportunity to transmit a particular vision of history to the people. The regime seized the opportunities offered by the 550th anniversary of the Battle of Aljubarrota (1935), the Double centenary of the Foundation and Restoration of Portugal (1940), the centenary of the taking of Lisbon from the Moors (1947) and the centenary of Don Henrique’s birth (1960) to promote its own version of the country’s history. During the 1930s the regime maintained a steady rhythm of significant political and cultural spectacles, both at home and in the colonies, as the following list attests:

Table 1 Exhibitions staged in Portugal, 1930-40

1930 National Colonial Congress
 1931 Exhibition held in conjunction with First Congress of *União Nacional* (National Union-Portugal’s only official political organization)
 1933 National Imperial Congress
 1934 Porto Colonial Exhibition (*Exposição Colonial Portuguesa*)
 1936 Celebration of 1926 National Revolution
 1936 First Economic Conference of the Portuguese colonial empire
 1937 Congress of the Portuguese Expansion in the World
 1940 Portuguese World Exhibition

It is interesting to compare the dominant recurrent spiritual and rural themes that were central to the Lisbon event with the contemporaneous New York World Fair (1939-40) which took as its theme 'Tomorrow's World' and focused on progress and the future (8). Whereas the organizers of the New York event, at least in its conception, looked to the future, an important strand in Portugal's 1940 Exhibition looked backwards to a 'golden era' and tried to connect it to the present. Moreover, the traditional, rural and spiritual dimension of the nation, which Salazar interpreted as a return to the simplicity of the pure and simple life, was linked to the country's historical and spiritual rights to empire. Imperialism was justified on moral grounds and offered as an example to be followed by other imperial powers, as we shall see later. The regime enthusiastically embraced Lusotropicalism, a multi-racial concept, on the grounds that Portuguese colonialism was fundamentally distinct from other European experiences (9).

Throughout its first decade, the Salazar regime placed cultural policy at the top of its political agenda. The ambitious aim was to recover 'a true Portuguese culture' rooted in conservative and backward-looking principles. The *Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional* (SPN) was established as the brain-centre of cultural policy and propaganda, under its director, António Ferro, who reported directly to Salazar (10). Charged with generating national identity and a 'spirit of unity', the SPN employed propaganda to transmit the government's message to a largely illiterate population through organs such as the press and publishing, radio, cinema and theatre. To help achieve this, the media were fed a constant diet of commemorations, ceremonies, awards, conferences and other events. For Ferro, the educative function was paramount. The aim was to 'utilizar todos os grandes valores e todas as grandes datas da nossa História, como estímulo e lição para os Portugueses de hoje' (11) (to utilize all the great values and dates in our history as a symbol and lesson for the current generation of Portuguese).

In his inaugural speech to the Secretariat of National Propaganda in 1933, Salazar expressed the hope that the new department would help the Portuguese people to a greater appreciation of their real value as an 'ethnic group, a cultural centre, a productive

force, with a civilizing capacity, as an independent unity in the concert of nations..' (12). The SNI's *política do espírito* (politics of the spirit) sought to recover and promote national popular traditions, folklore and to restore Portugal's 'spiritual sovereignty'. The intention was no less than the 'moral regeneration' of the nation. To this end, no facet of public and everyday life was left untouched by a policy that would impact on all classes, generations and regions. The *Estado Novo* decreed new civic holidays (May 28th, the anniversary of the 1926 military coup) and altered street names to eliminate any association with the discredited Republican regime that had preceded it. Scores of public monuments were commissioned in order to commemorate major events, generate a pride in the country's history and create a 'new tradition'.

. Public buildings were erected in a *novo estilo* (new style), strongly imbued with a Portuguese character but reflecting the influence of modernism (13). At the same time, traditional and historical forms of architecture were promoted to generate community feeling and pride. Amid all this activity, what has been described as *estatuomania* (statue-mania) gripped the country as sculptors took on the task of fashioning images of iconic figures in Portuguese history (14). In the construction sector, the nationalist cultural movement encouraged the development of a neo-traditional style known as *casa portuguesa*. This architecture was associated with a return to traditional ways by making optimum use of glazed tiles, cork, wrought iron, cotton prints etc. The country's historic heritage received close attention as major restoration work began on St George's Castle and the Sé cathedral in Lisbon, the battlefield monasteries at Batalha and Alcobaça, the twelfth-century Domus Municipalis in Bragança and the royal palace at Vila Viçosa as part of an effort to make the historic patrimony more visible and accessible to the public. The restoration work stood as 'physical proof of the regime's commitment to restoring the values of a national past in order to spearhead a *ressurgimento nacional*' (15). Salazar charged the recently-created *Direcção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais* with no less than the reconfiguration of the collective historical imaginary. It supervised the building and renovation of monuments and civil commemorations, paying particular attention to those that could trace their origins back to the medieval era (16). By focusing on three symbols: '*o castelo, a igreja e o mosteiro*', an attempt was made to reinforce the

association between political power, religious authority and faith. This trinity had underpinned the nation's greatness in the past and was expected to do so again in the future. The regime took great pride in launching major building projects to express the new mood of confidence and resurgence as well as ensure that visitors could reach the Exhibition site, including the new international airport at Portela, the maritime station in the capital, the opening of the Marginal (the coastal road between Cascais and Lisbon), the *Estádio Nacional* (National Stadium, inaugurated in 1944), as well as new railways, hotels and port installations the length and breadth of the country.

The young were a prime target in this drive to instill national pride at an early age. Coimbra's theme park, *Portugal dos Pequenitos* (children's Portugal), opened as a playground. It consisted of miniature houses, farms, castles and national monuments, including the famous convent window at Tomar. Even in this popular attraction the educative function was apparent, complementing the efforts made in the school classroom, to employ history to *formar portugueses* (make Portuguese) and, for this reason, any alternative versions were routinely denounced as unpatriotic. Competitions were organized, most notably one in 1938 to find the most Portuguese village in country. Just how concerned the organizers were to preserve the past is evident in the rules that stipulated the winner must demonstrate 'resistance to decomposition and outside influences, and its conservation in the purest state possible'. When announcing Monsanto as the winner, the Lisbon daily newspaper and regime mouth-piece *Diário da Manhã* eulogised the village as 'paradise on earth' (17). A similar preoccupation with the past is apparent in the encouragement given to folklore and folk-music. *Ranchos Folclóricos* (traditional rural musicians, singers and dancers) received state support, although the SNI ideologues adopted a more cautious attitude towards the *fado* because of its political and social content as well as its part-African origins. Later, when emptied of any political meaning, *fado* rapidly became a musical symbol of Portuguese national identity. Across the country, museums opened to convey the cultural heritage and contribute to the invention of tradition. Such was the frequency that materials and items from museum collections were requisitioned for the various events that they sometimes returned damaged (18). Even postage stamps transmitted the dominant discourse with the

issue of sets commemorating the discoveries although, unusually for authoritarian dictatorships, none were released that featured Salazar himself (19). Cinema was identified as an important propaganda instrument. The government lavished resources on film and newsreel in order to ensure that its ideas were transmitted to audiences and major public events were recorded on documentary films. António Lopes Ribeiro, who became known as the *cineaste do regime* (the regime's film-maker), produced a steady diet of films recording the state-sponsored propaganda for transmission to a national audience. Ribeiro's work benefited from state funding, including the major feature film, *Feitiço Imperial* (1940), about Portugal's mission to bring 'civilisation' to Africa (20).

The development of the 'politics of the spirit' involved mobilizing culture as propaganda, reconciling the traditional with the modern and developing a national popular culture grounded in Salazarian values. The policy is attributed to António Ferro, a journalist who had conducted a series of interviews with Salazar in 1932 and became SPN head in October 1933. A nationalist, modernist and admirer of Mussolini's Italy, Ferro imported European concepts into Portugal and ensured that his *política do espírito* remained at the heart of government policy. As Ferro himself put it, the policy was anchored in the belief that 'the spirit is indeed also material, a precious metal, the raw material of men's souls and the people's souls' (21).

Portugal was already a nation with a strong national identity, having been an independent state with stable frontiers for 800 years, predating industrialization by many centuries. The country boasted a long history with regard to its territorial stability along with linguistic, ethnic and religious homogeneity. Indeed, as Eduardo Lourenço pointed out, Portugal suffers not so much from a crisis of identity as from hyper-identity (22). However, since the nineteenth century, the intelligentsia had begun to express fears that Portugal's decadence and backwardness was eroding this strong sense of identity. Salazarist conservatives shared this reading of Portuguese history anchored in the belief that the era of the discoveries constituted a golden age that was followed by a long period of decline that culminated in the Republic (1910-1928) which had become a by-word for political instability and financial chaos. Inevitably, Salazar's cultural policy, which

embraced architecture, music, archeology, history etc., sought to build a 'new' Portugal to reverse the decadent state the country found itself in. To remind the public that this process commenced with the military takeover, António Ferro imitated the Italian regime and modelled the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the military intervention on Mussolini's Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution, his commemoration of the March on Rome in 1922 (23).

Because it took place after the outbreak of war in September 1939, the political significance of the representations inevitably outweighed any commercial considerations. Driven by overtly political and ideological purposes, the *Mundo Português* Exhibition was transformed into an ambitious propaganda vehicle to persuade a domestic audience of the benefits that accrued from the possession of an empire and demonstrate to the watching world that improvements in its colonial administration had delivered economic and social progress to its subject peoples. Another priority was to engender loyalty to a new political order that lacked the legitimizing stamp of democratic approval fourteen years after the military overthrow the Republic. Just as Paris's 1900 Exposition Universelle was intended to show the world that France had recovered from its defeat in 1871, so the 1940 event was designed to demonstrate that the country had recovered from the 'chaos' of the previous regime. Salazar's dictatorship deliberately sought to use the medium of a major themed exhibition to present and ritualize the symbols of *portugalidade*. Accordingly, Salazar expressed his hopes that the Exhibition would '*dar ao povo um tónico de alegria e confiança em si própria, para afirmar a sua capacidade realizadora*' (give the people a tonic of happiness and self-confidence to affirm their ability to achieve). As a result, it became 'the most significant cultural event in the ideological building process of the New State' where the ideology and mythology of the regime were exalted and represented' (24).

The Exhibition formed the centerpiece of a national commemoration that lasted throughout the year and covered the whole country. The commemorations were divided historically with specific weeks devoted to the 'Medieval', 'Imperial' and 'Brigantine' periods. During the fortnight devoted to the Medieval era, ceremonies took place at

Guimarães (to celebrate the founding of the nation), Braga, Oporto, Coimbra and, lastly, Lisbon. The building work on the Exhibition site at Belém took over two years to complete during which time five thousands workers toiled in a collaborative effort by artists, sculptors, composers, photographers and others. Work did freeze for a month on the outbreak of war in September 1939 before the decision was taken to continue. Salazar took a close personal interest in the project at all times (no doubt mindful of the potential costs in financial terms) and often telephoned to enquire how the work was progressing. By the time the well-resourced event closed its doors on 2 December 1940 some three million visitors had been exposed to its narrative of national glory. In December 1940, a violent storm badly damaged some of the buildings, although a number of items still remain today, including the marina, the marine horses (sculptured by António Duarte) and the tropical gardens.

The Exhibition comprised a range of pavilions devoted to the foundation of the nation, the discoveries, independence and the diaspora. A pavilion dedicated to contemporary Portugal (Portugal 1940) highlighted the achievements of the *Estado Novo*. Smaller pavilions housed exhibits for Lisbon and Brazil (the only foreign country invited to participate) and visitors could also enjoy a Portuguese boat (*nau*), replicas of Portuguese villages, tropical gardens, and an amusement park. In the pavilions, tradition took centre stage with rooms filled with costumes, foods, cooking utensils, agricultural implements and demonstrations of traditional crafts. Built as the Exhibition's centerpiece on the seaboard opposite the Jerónimos Monastery, the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* (monument to the discoveries) was originally constructed from temporary materials but later rebuilt as a permanent structure for the Henrician anniversary celebrations in 1960. Meanwhile, in the colonial section, the popular attractions included a Mozambican village and a typical street from the Far East colony of Macau.

As already noted, in common with other authoritarian regimes, the *Estado Novo* employed history as a means to justify and legitimize its seizure and exercise of power. The regime placed great importance on the role of history in the construction of *portugalidade* (portugueseness). In 1936, Salazar had re-founded the Portuguese

Academy of History to promote a re-interpretation of the past that accorded with the regime's values. By 1940 history had become state propaganda and the commemorations offered an opportunity to inculcate an historical consciousness among the public under the slogan *orgulhosos da nossa história* (pride in our history). To this end, the Exhibition represented both a celebration of Salazar's efforts to liberate Portugal from its decadence and a platform to present the regime's version of the country's history. Accordingly, the organizers structured the exhibits around the high-points of Portuguese history-the Foundation, the Occupation and Conquest, Independence and the Maritime Empire which was lauded as one of the great achievements of mankind. The key dates 1140-1640-1940 (emblazoned on three towers that stood at the entrance gate) affirmed a line of continuity based on a conception of history as evolution without change in which the nation's soul remained constant despite the passage of time (25). For some observers, a further contradiction, even schizophrenia, lay at the heart of this approach. The relentlessly backward-looking rhetoric could not be easily reconciled with the modernist architecture and sculptures that adorned the site. Presenting the past in a modernist guise only thinly disguised that architect Cottinelli Telmo's *estilo português de 1940* (Portuguese style 1940) was, in fact, little more than a pastiche of different styles.

The choice of the site for the Exhibition, Belém and the Jerónimos Monastery, was intended to be symbolic. In the national memory, the location represented a golden age when it was the locus of the country's position as a maritime and transcontinental power. What took place represented a systematic 'ideologization of history' in which diverse memories are transformed into a single official memory to become part of the national identity. In other words, selective history and symbols (explorers, soldier-heroes, national icons, etc.) were manipulated to serve as both a form of national cohesion and act as an inspirational and mobilizing force. In a specific example of the 'invention of tradition', the organizers designed a new flag for Portugal's first King, Afonso Henriques in order to display it in the parades and at the Exhibition. In practice, the efforts to produce a *história única* (single version of history) became equivalent to the role of the *partido único* (single party) in the political sphere.

Described by its *Comissário Geral*, Augusto de Castro, as *a Cidade Simbólica da História de Portugal* (the symbolic city of Portuguese history), the Exhibition presented an inventory of the achievements of the nation in the form of an illustrated history lesson. It reconstructed how the Portuguese saw themselves but also how they viewed the world. The New State re-imagined Portugal as an oasis of peace, reflected in the slogan *orgulhosamente sós* (proudly alone), a problem-free country that served as an example to other nations at a time of international upheaval and war. Particular stress was placed on order and authority and on the 'harmonious' relations that existed between capital and labour (26)). Above all, the public was served a strongly ethnocentric and paternalistic version of national history.

The 1940 exhibition aimed to provide '*uma lição viva de história de Portugal*' (a living lesson) in Portuguese history and the nation was imagined or re-imagined in a self-exclusionary way with its emphasis on national heroes, ancestors and accomplishments. Portuguese history was presented as a series of episodes populated by heroes capable of extraordinary deeds to which Salazar was added as the heir to the lineage. Clearly, the link with these icons of Portugueseness was intended to nurture a reverential respect for the leader, underlining his providential power as reflected in the panel in the *Estado Novo* room that reminded visitors that *o chefe é a imagem viva da Nação* (the leader is the living image of the nation).

Arlindo Monteiro has argued that the regime's official history led to a *hipervalorização do herói individual* in which everything is attributed to the lone hero guided by providence (27). Heroic figures were divorced from their historical context and came to embody the values that the regime privileged as part of the official mythology. In the pantheon, Afonso Henriques, who fought for independence, Infante D. Henrique and the giants from the age of the discoveries took pride of place. One room in the Exhibition was devoted to 'faith and sacrifice' and featured Dom Sebastião, the Portuguese monarch who has long been the subject of myth and legend. Salazar was portrayed as heir to this exalted company of national heroes, a status merited on the grounds of his skillful management of the economic crisis. To reinforce this message, a room dedicated to

finance conveyed the message that Portugal's economic independence was equally as valuable as its political independence. On its walls of a room dominated by large statues of Salazar and President Carmona, hung a self-congratulatory banner proclaiming *Portugal é um país de boas contas* (Portugal is a country that keeps good accounts) (28). The self-confident tone was reflected in another banner that declared *Até agora temos realizado tudo o que havemos proposto* (To date, we have accomplished all we have planned).

As with other authoritarian regimes, the public were exhorted to imitate their leader in the hope that this would develop a new national conscience. In reality, Salazar remained a somewhat distant, avuncular figure whose inspirational qualities were less public than those displayed by Hitler and Mussolini. Regime propaganda proclaimed Salazar as a wise leader who had extricated Portugal from a major financial and political crisis and had kept the country out of dangerous conflicts such as the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War.

As already noted, the regime adopted a deeply conservative and rural ethos, a reflection of the influence exerted by the conservative agricultural interests that exercised such strong influence over Salazarism during the 1930s and 1940s. The similarities with De Valera's Ireland are striking: both societies were projected as non-material, deeply Catholic rural paradises that had turned their backs on what were regarded as the evils of the modern world and where spirituality was accorded a higher value than economic progress.

Up until the 1950s, the peasant and rural way of life came to be regarded as the repository of national virtues and an integral part of nationhood. Salazar used the dual centenary to praise 'the traditional order, the past, the 'good old days' of the medieval *pax ruris*...the neo-medieval *saudosismo* of many Salazarian intellectuals, emblems of the traditionalist order of the Nation' (29). The value placed on the simplicity of rural life was reflected in the reconstruction of traditional Portuguese villages at the Exhibition site and the relocation of local inhabitants to Lisbon for the duration of the event. In essence, the

message was that simple peasant living was superior to modern, materialist-dominated culture. This dominant ruralism lavished excessive attention upon traditional ways of living, costumes, song and gastronomy. Traditional activities such as agriculture, stock raising and fishing were seen as key elements in forging the national identity. This is reflected in the string of museums that opened their doors during the 1930s dedicated to national and regional culture and the 1940 Exhibition added to their number by including a pavilion of Popular Art (later Museum of Popular Art). At least during the first decade of its existence before the tensions with the modernizing developmentalists surfaced, this conservative vision of Portuguese popular culture prevailed during which, in its exaggerated form, Salazar could be accused of harbouring the desire to transform his country into a vast *rancho folclórico*. In many respects, the 1940 event celebrated the success of the strategy in which the country turned to its past, rather than strive for industrialization and modernization.

As we have seen, the programme to restore the national heritage looked deliberately to a pre-republican and liberal past when church and state imposed a strict conservatism on society. Anchored in Catholic conservatism and traditionalism, this hyper-nationalist and morally-superior religious representation of the national heritage naturally expunged any elements of liberal and foreign influence. The marriage of Catholicism and nationalism had reached its apogee in May 1940 with the signing of the Concordat with Rome which included an *acôrdo missionário* (missionary agreement). It provided the perfect opportunity for Cardinal Cerejeira, the patriarch of Lisbon, to make the link between a catholic nation and its imperial policy during the many ceremonials at which he presided. *Deus, Pátria e Família* (God, Fatherland and Family) became the trinity that encapsulated the fundamental values of Salazarism. One of the main ideological discourses was the image of a moral nation and empire (30). Catholic nationalism provided the legitimizing discourse of colonial domination based on the claim that

‘Portuguese imperialism is very different from other European imperialisms [because of its] altruistic concern to convert to Christianity [and] civilize the

backward races. The expression ‘Portuguese Empire’ corresponds to the imperative of the race and represents only the awareness that Portugal has of its historical destiny and its role as main defender of the spiritual patrimony of humankind’ (31)

According to António Ferro, cultural policy had to build the ‘national family’, a mono-cultural, Catholic nation based on corporativist principles. Unlike Mussolini, Salazar accepted the limits of authoritarianism and embraced Catholicism as a form of Portuguese popular culture. Rather than trying to create a fascist identity based on the subordination of the individual to the state, Salazarism blended the traditional and socially conservative with aspects of the modern.

Public spaces are important to authoritarian regimes. Squares or *praças* host public spectacles where citizens can be reminded of past glories by events that trigger social memory. The architectural setting assumes great importance because national spaces can be brought into the present by their use for major events. The capital, along with other cities, underwent a major re-development during the 1930s. Under the stewardship of Duarte Pacheco, Public Works and Communications minister, a swathe of restoration and building projects got underway to make Lisbon into a worthy imperial capital. Given carte blanche by Salazar, Duarte Pacheco oversaw an extensive urban renewal, restoration and public works programme in the Portuguese capital. In part, the aim was to establish ‘visual texts’ designed to convey the regime’s preferred readings of history (32).

The choice of Belém, a district of the city located on the shores of the Tagus river earmarked for urban renewal, as the site for the Exhibition was heavily symbolic. The buildings at Belém are the architectural representations of the Manueline era when Portugal was a leading power and pioneer of maritime discoveries. The area is indelibly linked to the messianic imperial idea. The focal point of the 1940 Exhibition was the Praça do Império which is bounded by buildings resonating with history, including the Belém tower (departure-point for the maritime discoveries) that had long stood as ‘a symbol of Portugal’s genius for exploration’ and had already been incorporated into the

imperial narrative. Belém itself signified the ‘birth, origins and claims of divinely ordained destiny’ (33). The dominant ideology was reinforced by the location of the Jerónimos monastery on the site, a building dating from 1501 and repository for the remains of Vasco da Gama, one of the great explorers, and Luís de Camões, author of the epic poem *Os Lusíadas*. To these monuments the architects Cottinelli Telmo and Leopoldo Almeida added the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* (Monument to the Discoveries), built in the shape of a caravel. In some respects, the site has parallels with the (uncompleted) new city on the outskirts of Rome which Mussolini planned to be the spatial expression of his regime’s political, cultural and economic achievements. The city was founded to house a world exhibition (*Esposizione Universale di Roma*) and, not unlike Lisbon, was designed to reconnect Rome to the Mediterranean and make the Italian capital an imperial city (34).

By 1940, the imperial theme had become well-established among the European colonial powers anxious to celebrate their imperial achievement, as demonstrated at the various *Expositions Universelles and Coloniales* held in Paris (1900 and 1937 for example) and Wembley (1924). Portugal was no exception, as evidenced by the *Exposição Colonial Portuguesa* which attracted 1.3 million visitors to Porto in 1934, although there was a clear-cut commercial and industrial, rather than simply a commemorative, motivation behind it. Just as Mussolini sought to establish an ideological identification between fascist Italy and antiquity so Salazar made a similar link with the ‘golden age’ of the discoveries and the empire as core symbols of identity.

As already noted, the New State used the event to demonstrate the pivotal role played by the empire in the regime’s ideology and in defining its place in the world. The ‘discoveries’ had always constituted a historical reference point at the heart of Portuguese national identity. Narratives of imperialism were reworked and refined to emphasize that Portugal was not a second rank nation but a major power with a colonial empire that stretched across the globe. A key part of nationalist discourse under the dictatorship was that Portugal is not a small country. The scale of this pluri-continental empire was popularised in the saying *de Minho a Timor* (From the Minho to Timor) and, in school

textbooks, Portugal's imperial possessions were superimposed on maps of the United States and Europe from the Mediterranean to Russia to offer proof that Portugal was not only multi-continental but also as large as these great land masses.

Exhibitions, like the one held in 1940, promoted the advantages of empire for both the colonizers and the colonized (35). In order to transmit this message, the organizers presented a sanitized version of the exotic. This involved transplanting an entire African village from Guinea-Bissau to be reconstructed at Belém together with its tribesmen, while a Mozambican orchestra was brought over to entertain the visitors. These human showcases were common in international colonial exhibitions of the time where contradictory values coexisted with each other, demonstrating 'the plural morality in operation throughout European culture at the time' (36). These and other exhibits were designed to relay the gratitude felt by the colonized peoples for their deliverance from barbarism. Everywhere, the visitor was made aware of Portugal's role as a civilizer and the mutual benefits derived from Portugal's mission to *lusitanizar* other peoples.

Although this was not an international exhibition, Brazil was invited to take part because of the close cultural and historical connections between the two nations. The presence of its former colony served to deflect criticism of Portuguese colonialism and legitimize its civilizing role. The message was clear: not only was the Portuguese empire multi-racial but it did not practice discrimination. In the same textbooks, a mother figure of the nation sits with her arms around two children, one black, the other white. At the First colonial exhibition held in Oporto in 1934, the reconstructed indigenous villages from various parts of the empire and a 'typical' Macao street proved to be major attractions. These human showcases were common in international colonial exhibitions of the time (37). Indeed, a substantial number of people attended the event specifically 'to see the blacks' (38). The presence of colonial subjects was living proof of the country's 'missionary vocation' to expand the faith and bring to the rest of the world 'the light of Christian civilization'. Colonization was described as a 'racial tendency' of the Portuguese while events were held to celebrate that the 'overseas expansion was done more with the heart than with the sword' (38). The country was said to be incomplete

without its colonial subjects and its empire to be indivisibly part of the nation.

Interestingly, the Exhibition demonstrated how cartography can be used as a propaganda weapon in the nationalist and colonialist discourse (39). Maps and charts were enlisted to implant the idea of the national territory among a domestic audience. Hundreds of maps adorned the walls of the pavilions and rooms to reinforce the *Estado Novo*'s contention that the nation and the empire were inextricably and inalienably entwined.

Although the dictatorship endured for another thirty-four years and commemorative events continued to feature in its cultural policy, the 1940 Exhibition represented the high water-mark of the 'festival state'. Future events witnessed some dilution in their scale, ambition and confidence because of the impact on the economy of the Second World War and the defeat of fascism which transformed the regime's priorities. Although a direct heir to the Portuguese World Exhibition, the next celebration of empire in 1960 to mark the Fifth centenary of Henry the Navigator's death took place against the backcloth of growing anti-colonial sentiment across the world and on the eve of the outbreak of the wars of liberation in Portugal's African possessions.

Culture did bind the Portuguese people to the regime but it should be remembered that when persuasion and propaganda did not have the desired effect, the New State ensured conformity and loyalty through repression and censorship. The nation was above everything and Salazar, as a father and head of the nation, had to be respected. Indeed, patriotism, as defined by the regime, was made the litmus-test of nationality, as Salazar reminded his fellow-countrymen: 'Whoever is not patriotic, cannot be considered Portuguese' (40). However, it is undeniable that the 1940 Exhibition acted as a powerful weapon in the construction of a new national identity by harnessing the discourse of empire to the power of the New State. In part, it explains why Portugal, although economically and militarily the weakest European colonial power, clung stubbornly on to its empire longer than its counterparts.

Historical discourse and heritage were utilized to validate a political regime and shape the national consciousness of the Portuguese people. Not only was the event

intended as a vehicle of popular culture and education but its purpose was also to inspire. Its important educative function is encapsulated in the chief organizer Augusto de Castro's aspiration that the visiting public would *saber ser Português* (know how to be Portuguese). Judged by the frequency of commemorations, anniversaries, historical processions and reconstructions, the Salazar regime merits the description as a 'festival state' designed to disguise the lack of mass mobilization and the absence of a strong political movement. When, nearly half a century later, the democratic, European and post-colonial Portugal hosted the 1998 world Expo (May-September 1998), the last universal exhibition of the twentieth century, the nationalist-imperialist propaganda had disappeared and the country was represented as part of the international community of nations and, although a maritime theme persisted, the focus was on the conservation of the oceans and openness of the country to the world community.

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David Corkill is Professor of Iberian Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University and José Almeida is Research Fellow in the Manchester European Research Institute (MERI) at MMU.

